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(S) NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

NRO Review Completed.

August 8, 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: Recommendations on the Space Station Draft Report

As requested in [redacted] August 4 memorandum, the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) has reviewed the draft of the Space Station Report intended for consideration by the SIG(Space) on August 10. The NRO believes that the report contains an acceptable discussion of the options proposed for Presidential consideration regarding a manned space program. 25X1

The NRO strongly recommends the DCI adopt a position supporting option three: defer commitment to a permanently manned space station pending additional definition of requirements, costs, and risks. Selection of option three requires more complete documentation and justification of space station requirements, missions and the utility of man in space before major hardware commitments are made. This course of action is consistent with the NRO's previously stated position, also held by the Department of Defense, that currently there are no identified requirements which require a permanently manned space station. Selection of option three will provide the benefit of two other essential actions:

a. Permit better definition of requirements and design concepts so as to improve confidence in the cost estimates for a manned space station program; and,

b. Allow NASA to continue to focus on the priority task of making the Shuttle fully operational and cost effective.

If the Administration strongly believes the U.S. must take some steps towards developing a permanently manned U.S. presence in space, then the NRO would advocate selection of option two and its evolutionary development of expanded STS capabilities and unmanned platforms. Our 20 years experience in space systems acquisition leads us to conclude that there is great merit in an evolutionary approach that builds on existing capabilities. This approach will also help us to better understand the role of man in space and the value of permanent space facilities.

In the NRO view, option one is premature and has high risk associated with projected costs and competition for scarce resources. Potential adverse economic implications for the entire national security space effort in particular, and the federal budget in general, must not be overlooked.

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In summary, the NRO supports a deferral of a commitment to a permanently manned space station (option three). However, if it is determined to be in the national interest to pursue a permanent manned U.S. presence in space, the NRO would advocate the Shuttle based evolutionary approach proposed in option two.

E. C. Aldridge, Jr.

cc: DUSD(P)
DUSD(C^3I)
D/ICS

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